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14. ABSTRACT In his memorandum of February 5, 2001, the former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld discussed the role of the Department of Defense (DOD) in relationship to the Department of State (DOS) and Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) for U.S. response to foreign humanitarian assistance (FHA). Rumsfeld delineated a process in which OFDA would forward an official request by the Executive Secretary through DOS to DOD for the needed military capabilities. Depending on the magnitude of the anticipated response or the level of sensitivity, the request would either be routed from DOS to the Joint Staff for execution or Secretary of Defense for approval, then Joint Staff for execution. Upcoming and ongoing missions and expected responses to disasters around the globe will continue to stress the military's ability to respond, and the U.S. may have greater difficulty mobilizing its military at times to assist in any single, devastating FHA operation, or multiple FHA missions. An overburdened military could fail in ways that could lead to detrimental effects on the international reputation of the U.S. New requirements for frequent review of contingency plans emphasizes the importance of ongoing planning for multiple contingencies to the success of DOD FHA programs in a world environment of constantly changing demands upon the U.S. interests. Contingency plans must be in place and frequently reviewed and adjusted rather than relying on crisis action planning (CAP) for FHA operations. Although not a complete or perfect fix, COCOMs and OFDA must collaborate and create contingency plans, which would better allow DOD to fill the supporting role to DOS that was conceptualized by Rumsfeld in 2001. The shift in focus toward more effective and efficient execution of military support to OFDA during FHA operations should project timelines and specific tasks for military execution to stabilize the disaster until IGOs and NGOs can assume control. Therefore, this paper discusses the need to have collaborative contingency plans readily available for FHA to combatant commanders (CCDRs) and, as much as possible, avoid the pitfalls and inefficiencies associated with CAP. Ideally these contingency plans would be developed in collaboration between CCDRs staff, JIACGs, and an assigned OFDA liaison office at each COCOM.					
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Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG) Contingency Planning Collaboration  
Between Combatant Commands and Office of the US Foreign Disaster Assistance  
(OFDA) for Foreign Humanitarian Assistance.

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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10 May 2007

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## **Abstract**

In his memorandum of February 5, 2001, the former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld discussed the role of the Department of Defense (DOD) in relationship to the Department of State (DOS) and Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) for U.S. response to foreign humanitarian assistance (FHA). Rumsfeld delineated a process in which OFDA would forward an official request by the Executive Secretary through DOS to DOD for the needed military capabilities. Depending on the magnitude of the anticipated response or the level of sensitivity, the request would either be routed from DOS to the Joint Staff for execution or Secretary of Defense for approval, then Joint Staff for execution. Upcoming and ongoing missions and expected responses to disasters around the globe will continue to stress the military's ability to respond, and the U.S. may have greater difficulty mobilizing its military at times to assist in any single, devastating FHA operation, or multiple FHA missions. An overburdened military could fail in ways that could lead to detrimental effects on the international reputation of the U.S.

New requirements for frequent review of contingency plans emphasizes the importance of ongoing planning for multiple contingencies to the success of DOD FHA programs in a world environment of constantly changing demands upon the U.S. interests. Contingency plans must be in place and frequently reviewed and adjusted rather than relying on crisis action planning (CAP) for FHA operations. Although not a complete or perfect fix, COCOMs and OFDA must collaborate and create contingency plans, which would better allow DOD to fill the supporting role to DOS that was conceptualized by Rumsfeld in 2001. The shift in focus toward more effective and efficient execution of military support to OFDA during FHA operations should project timelines and specific tasks for military execution to stabilize the disaster until IGOs and NGOs can assume control. Therefore, this paper discusses the need to have collaborative contingency plans readily available for FHA to combatant commanders (CCDRs) and, as much as possible, avoid the pitfalls and inefficiencies associated with CAP. Ideally these contingency plans would be developed in collaboration between CCDRs staff, JIACGs, and an assigned OFDA liaison office at each COCOM.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), within the Agency for International Development, has primary responsibility for organizing US Government responses to international disasters.

DoD does not take a lead role in providing disaster assistance but may be asked by OFDA to assist when the disaster exceeds OFDA's response capabilities and the US military has unique assets to contribute (e.g., transportation, medical supplies, engineering equipment).

Donald Rumsfeld, February 5, 2001<sup>1</sup>

In his memorandum of February 5, 2001, former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld discussed the role of the Department of Defense (DOD) in relationship to the Department of State (DOS) for the United States (U.S.) response to foreign humanitarian assistance (FHA). More specifically, he defined the relationship between the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and DOD.<sup>2</sup> Rumsfeld delineated a process in which OFDA would forward an official request by its Executive Secretary through DOS to DOD for the needed military capabilities. Depending on the magnitude of the anticipated response or the level of sensitivity, the request would either be routed from DOS to the Joint Staff for execution or to the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) for approval, then Joint Staff for execution.<sup>3</sup> Although this memorandum gives the impression that Rumsfeld attempted to place DOD in a supporting role to DOS for FHA, there is no mention of how to plan for those disasters to create a seamless execution between both Federal agencies.

The military is spread too thin from continued multiple deployments, sustained peacekeeping, and nation-building missions. Upcoming and ongoing missions such as the projected stand-up of Africa Command (AFRICOM) and expected responses to disasters

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<sup>1</sup> The Honorable Donald Rumsfeld, *Disaster Response Procedures*, 5 February 2001. Memorandum to The Honorable Condoleezza Rice.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

around the globe will continue to stress the military's ability to respond, and the U.S. may have greater difficulty mobilizing its military at times to assist in any single, devastating FHA operation, or multiple FHA missions. The military, if overburdened by engaging in operations on multiple fronts, could fail in ways that could lead to detrimental effects on the international reputation of the U.S.

Part of an initial response by the DOD after the attack on the U.S. on September 11, 2001, was to initiate a requirement to review defense contingency plans every six months. The previous process for adaptive planning extended contingency plan reviews to as long as every two years and some up to five years. The new requirement for frequent review emphasizes the importance of ongoing planning for many contingencies to the success of DOD FHA programs in a world environment of constantly changing demands upon the FHA resources.

In support of the 2007 Chief of Naval Operations (CNOs) Guidance, and specifically the need to "build strong partnerships,"<sup>4</sup> this paper discusses the need to build solid partnerships between all U.S. governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that respond to FHA demands. However, because DOD and DOS function at the national-strategic level, the focal point of this paper is on those partnerships, and especially with Joint Interagency Coordination Groups (JIACGs) at the operational level or theater-strategic level; or specifically those relationships between the Combatant Commands (COCOM) and OFDA planning personnel. It also discusses the need to have contingency plans in place and frequently reviewed and adjusted rather than crisis action planning (CAP) for FHA

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<sup>4</sup> Michael G. Mullen. "CNO Guidance for 2007: Focus on Execution." 2 February 2007. [http://nwcintrinet/CNOG\\_2007.pdf](http://nwcintrinet/CNOG_2007.pdf) (accessed 15 February 2007).

operations in order to meet the CNOs Guidance of the "Focus on Execution."<sup>5</sup> Additionally, this paper's focus is not limited to the Navy, but is broader in scope, and therefore includes the joint relationships between all the Armed Forces, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and NGOs.

Although not a complete or perfect fix, COCOMs and OFDA must collaborate and create contingency plans, which would allow DOD to fill the supporting role to DOS that was conceptualized by Rumsfeld in 2001. The current method of CAP between OFDA and COCOMs does not allow a rapid shift to smooth execution. The shift in focus toward more effective and efficient execution of military support to OFDA during FHA operations should project timelines and specific tasks for military execution to stabilize the situation until IGOs and NGOs assume control. Therefore, this paper discusses the need to have collaborative contingency plans readily available for FHA to combatant commanders (CCDRs) and, as much as possible, avoid the pitfalls and inefficiencies associated with CAP. Ideally these contingency plans would be developed in collaboration between CCDR staffs and JIACGs at each COCOM.

## **BACKGROUND**

After the fall of the Soviet Union and prior to September 11, 2001, the U.S. military was downsized in strength. The force reductions by former President George H. W. Bush were intended to decrease military spending. This reduction rapidly accelerated during the Clinton years to a level below what Bush senior had projected. Although the size of the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

military forces shrank, deployments were not reduced. During the Clinton years, troop deployments increased for peacekeeping and nation-building missions.<sup>6</sup>

The attack on the U.S. in 2001 and subsequent mobilization of forces for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), resulted in increasing the length of deployments from six months in the 1990s to twelve months for Army troops.<sup>7</sup> In addition to stop loss orders to retain high-demand low-density skill sets, the Army recently extended its deployment lengths to fifteen months. Not only do Soldiers now deploy longer, but many have already deployed for more than one tour in Iraq or Afghanistan. The effects of these multiple deployments were reported recently in the news, focusing on declining morale and post traumatic stress disorders suffered primarily by Marines and Soldiers.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to deployments in support of the primary military missions, the military forces were deployed to conduct disaster relief (DR) and humanitarian assistance (HA) for the Northern Indonesia Tsunami in December 2004<sup>9</sup> and Hurricane Katrina in August 2005.<sup>10</sup> Nearly eighteen months after the devastating hurricane that struck New Orleans, the Army Corps of Engineers remains there to rebuild the levees. While the military support of these FHA/DR operations is considered highly successful, lessons learned can be studied by COCOM JIACGs to improve contingency planning and minimize the need for a solely CAP solution.

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<sup>6</sup> Frederick W. Kagan. "The U.S. Military's Manpower Crisis." *Foreign Affairs*, 21 June 2006. [http://www.aei.org/include/pub\\_print.asp?pubID=24584](http://www.aei.org/include/pub_print.asp?pubID=24584) (accessed 6 May 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Eve Conant. "How Chaplains, Soldiers Keep Faith." *Newsweek*, 7 May 2007. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18367801> (accessed 29 April 2007).

<sup>9</sup> James Daniel. "Operation Unified Assistance: Tsunami Transitions." *Military Review*, January-February 2006, 50-53.

<sup>10</sup> Sgt Sara Wood, USA. "New Orleans Wall Rebuilding on Track, Engineers' General States." *Armed Forces Press Release*, 7 March 2006. <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=15253> (accessed 14 April 2007).



In February 2007, the Pentagon announced that AFRICOM, a new unified COCOM, will be operational by September 2008. At this time it is unclear how large a military contingent is projected for this COCOM. However, AFRICOM is planned to be primarily an interagency command with assigned specialties from intelligence, diplomatic, medical, and health aid experts.<sup>11</sup> Since its primary mission is on regional stabilization, it would be helpful to build and fill permanent JIACG personnel roles from the start instead of the current ad hoc relationships that convene during crises. A key role should include a permanently assigned OFDA Liaison Officer (LNO) who would serve as a member of the JIACG and be involved in contingency planning.

In order to gain a better understanding of specific organizations, some roles and responsibilities are offered for clarification. First, JIACG is defined, as is its role within COCOM is explained. Then distinctions and definitions of planning as performed by the military staff are highlighted. Thirdly, FHA are defined. Fourth, the roles and responsibilities of the other governmental agencies will be explained with an emphasis on how they relate to FHA. The relationships of all involved agencies to the military response to FHA will be discussed, identifying strategies to improve planning interactions and ultimately the joint response. These are followed by an analysis section with arguments for and against the JIACG at the COCOM level, a conclusion, recommendations, and lessons learned.

The joint interagency coordination group (JIACG) is an interagency staff group that establishes regular, timely, and collaborative working relationships between civilian and military operational planners. Composed of USG [United States Government] civilian and military experts accredited to the combatant commander and tailored to meet the requirements of a supported combatant commander, the JIACG provides the combatant

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<sup>11</sup> Jackie Northam. "Pentagon Creates Military Command for Africa." *Morning Edition*, 7 February 2007. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7234997> (accessed 17 March 2007).

commander with the capability to collaborate at the operational level with other USG civilian agencies and departments. JIACGs complement the interagency coordination that takes place at the strategic level through the NSCS [National Security Council System].<sup>12</sup>

For the CCDR: A JIACG's role is to coordinate operational planning in a contingency operation with civilian agencies in the U.S. government. It supports day-to-day planning at the combatant commander headquarters and advises planners regarding civilian agency operations, capabilities, and limitations. It also provides perspective in the coordinated use of national power.<sup>13</sup>

This leads back to the issue at hand; that contingency planning, not CAP, must be done in conjunction with JIACGs at the operational commander level. This will improve unity of effort to relieve an already strained military force prior to a crisis. This in turn should diminish the likelihood that the military would be involved in the operation for an extended period of time, if at all.

*Joint Publication 5-0: Joint Operation Planning* states that planning at the operational level is essential in order to anticipate what must be done to support operations. Careful consideration must be taken into account with regards to the initial mobilization, deployment, employment, and sustainment of forces. Additionally, the joint publication specifies that planners and commanders must have a clearly defined end state for termination.<sup>14</sup> Also included in this definition is that the military planners must plan not only for expected contingencies, but must also plan for any additional unknown crises.<sup>15</sup>

Additionally, *Joint Publication 5-0* states that there are two categories of planning for coordinating and solving dilemmas. They are contingency planning and (CAP). The first is

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<sup>12</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination During Joint Operations* Vol I, Joint Publication 3-08 17 March 2006, xii.

<sup>13</sup> <http://jfc.com.mil/aboutfact/jiacg.htm> (accessed 9 May 2007); U.S. Joint Forces Command. *Commander's Handbook for the Joint Interagency Coordination Group* (Suffolk; VA: March 2007), 3-7, 3-8.

<sup>14</sup> Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, December 26, 2006, ix.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

contingency planning, formerly known as deliberate planning, and is done at prearranged time periods set by DOD and relies heavily on predicted assumptions to allow the planning team to continue planning for plan execution. Contingency planning is done during peacetime or during non-crisis situations. The second type is CAP, which begins only when a crisis has occurred; plans are based on the actual circumstances.<sup>16</sup> Format and process of the plans are generally similar; the main differences between the two types of adaptive planning processes are in the level of ambiguity, time available to plan, and the preferred outcomes or end state as set by the commander's objectives.

Contingency planning allows the commander and staff cells a more successful planning course to achieve the desired end state more efficiently. These projected plans accomplish the mission via courses of action (COAs). COAs are developed by the commander's staff and facilitate the commander's ability to mobilize forces, coordinate logistics, and identify shortfalls, for example. This in turn helps complete the identified mission and meet the desired end state more efficiently and effectively.<sup>17</sup> In cases of providing FHA, where time delays can result in a greater loss of life such as earthquakes, it makes sense to plan in advance for the prospective contingencies.

The Department of State (DOS) advises and assists the President in planning and implementing the foreign policy of the United States. DOD coordinates with DOS to carry out foreign policy objectives, which include bilateral and multilateral military relationships; treaties and agreements involving other DOD activities or interests such as: technology transfer, armaments cooperation and control, FHA, peace operations (including those conducted under United Nations auspices), and other contingencies.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Joint Publication 3.33, *Joint Task Force Headquarters*, February 16, 2007, p. GL-11.

<sup>18</sup> Joint Publication 3-08, *Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination During Joint Operations* Vol I, March 17, 2006, p. xii.

DOS in turn provides guidance to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which also supports the foreign policy goals of the U.S. by promoting economic growth, democracy, conflict prevention, and FHA.<sup>19</sup> However, USAID does not fall under the direct command of the DOS. Rather, USAID serves in parallel organizational structure and has its own distinct role as the primary agency for organizing the U.S. Government (USG) response to international disasters. Embedded in USAID is OFDA, which has responded to the world's disasters since 1963.<sup>20</sup> These agencies already have well established relationships with NGOs and IGOs to support FHA operations.

However, as previously mentioned, OFDA must request DOD military services via DOS to obtain use of military forces, especially specific capabilities such as lift. USAID and DOS both are linked to the President's National Security Strategy by three underlying and interdependent components that include defense, development, and diplomacy. With a commonality of goals, these two USG agencies collaborate and coordinate their efforts. These two agencies share a vision of "teamwork." This teamwork could be further developed by utilizing JIACG in the planning process for FHA.

According to Joint Pub 1, Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the U.S, DOD is to provide common defense with the "fundamental purpose...to win the Nation's wars."<sup>21</sup> The publication goes on to additionally state that the military also protects other national interests and objectives that may not include combat. Examples are our humanitarian assistance at

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<sup>19</sup> The United States Naval War College: Joint Military Operations Department. "USAID/OFDA and DoD Roles in Foreign Disaster Response." NWC 6011, United States Agency for International Development: October 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Joint Publication 1, *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States*, November 14, 2000, Chapter III, p. III-1. Note that as doctrine is revised, the term MOOTW will be replaced by Range of Military Operations (ROMO).

home or abroad, peace promoting or stability operations, and deterrence.<sup>22</sup> Other non-combat objectives may include DOD support to counterdrug operations, combating terrorism, and protection of shipping, show of force, arms control, and disarmament.

FHA consists of programs or actions to alleviate or diminish the results of natural or man-made disasters or other universal detrimental circumstances. These include, but are not limited to, human pain and suffering, disease, famine, or hardships that may present a severe risk to the existence of a population or that can result in great damage to or loss of property. When FHA is provided by U.S. military forces, one of the desired end states is that the military's role in the FHA operations is limited in resources and time.<sup>23</sup> This planned limitation in duration and resources allows the military to fulfill its suggested supporting role to the DOS, or more accurately, USAID at the national-strategic level, and OFDA at the operational or theater-strategic level at COCOMs.

USAID and DOS have recently delineated specific tasks for disaster response into the strategic, operational and tactical levels for easier coordination with DOD. At the strategic level, the DOS will interface with the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), or, as previously mentioned, the SECDEF is notified for approval authority for those disasters of significant magnitude or exceptional importance. At the operational level, the communication and coordination link for the CDR is with USAID. Ideally there would be an OFDA LNO stationed at each COCOM. However, if there is no OFDA LNO, then the COCOM should make contact with USAID to coordinate unity of effort. At the tactical level, or Joint Task

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, Chapter III, pp III-1-III-2.

<sup>23</sup> Joint Publication 3-33, *Joint Task Force Headquarters*, February 16, 2007, p. GL-12.

Force (JTF), the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) may attach a LNO to coordinate relief efforts.<sup>24</sup>

USAID responds to approximately seventy disasters per calendar year.<sup>25</sup> Of these, the military is involved in approximately five operations per year.<sup>26</sup> A typical response by USAID to a disaster includes notification to the OFDA duty officer who then places some of its personnel on standby to respond. USAID coordinates with the U.S. Embassy or USAID mission in the affected country.

A disaster can be declared by the U.S. Ambassador, Chief of Mission, or Assistant Secretary of State responsible for that host nation (HN) if: the incident is more than the HN can handle, the HN requests or is willing to accept U.S. assistance, or there is U.S. national interest.<sup>27</sup> Once the level of the disaster is determined, a DART is deployed to the HN. This team primarily operates at the tactical level and could collaborate at the joint task force level. This in turn activates a Response Management Team (RMT) in Washington that waits for the assessment from the DART. The DART team conducts rapid assessments upon their arrival. Some of these team specialists include water and sanitation, health, nutrition, and shelter. Other members that support the DART are administrative, communications, and information officers. Each of these roles is covered in depth in OFDA's Field Operations Guide for Disaster Assessment and Response.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance, A Quick Reference Guide for the Military, Joint Humanitarian Operations Course (JHOC), Miami, FL, March 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> The United States Naval War College: Joint Military Operations Department. "USAID/OFDA and DoD Roles in Foreign Disaster Response." NWC 6011, United States Agency for International Development: October 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> "Foreign Operations Guide for Disaster Assistance and Response: U.S. Agency for International Development, Bureau for Humanitarian Response, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance." OFDA, August 1998. Version 3.0., Chapter 4.

OFDA has a worldwide staff of only 250 personnel. Considering how small its staff is, OFDA's response time for arriving, assessing the situation, and providing aid as well as coordinating with NGOs to a disaster struck HN is remarkable. In 2001, during the Gujarat, India Earthquake, within a day a RMT in Washington was established and ready to respond. By the third day, a DART had arrived, completed an assessment, and connected with NGO partners in Gujarat. By the sixth day, OFDA airlift and financial aid to the India government had arrived. During this time, water purification had started and news reports were praising their efforts. On the tenth day, four DOD aircraft arrived with relief supplies. By day fifteen, redeployment of the DART began and the mission was transferred to the USAID Mission.<sup>29</sup>

Strategic placement of OFDA Field Offices in Costa Rica, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Kenya, Nepal, and Thailand help with this phenomenal rapid response. Its very short chain of command in comparison to the Armed Forces allows it to move expeditiously as well. OFDA additionally has some LNOs assigned to US Southern Command, United Nations-New York City (UN-NYC), and United Nations-Geneva. Stockpiles of emergency relief supplies are located in Miami, Italy, and the United Arab Emirates.<sup>30</sup>

Although these emergency supplies are strategically placed around the globe, OFDA does not have contingency plans in place for common phenomena such as tsunamis, floods, or earthquakes. OFDA readily admits that it engages in CAP for each crisis. OFDA's success in rapid response for deployment and FHA resolution is because of its ability to

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<sup>29</sup> OFDA. "OFDA Response to the Gujarat, India Earthquake in January/February 2001". Flowchart from Joint Operations Course (JHOC), Miami, FL. March 2007.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

efficiently deploy a DART to the nation in extremis, ability to quickly obtain financial aid funding, and its ongoing relationships with NGOs in the region affected.<sup>31</sup>

Since most of OFDA's deployments are to manage crises on a small scale, this process works well. However, the problems begin with FHA operations on a larger scale that may involve logistical assistance from DOD. Since limited to no contingency planning occurs between COCOM and OFDA, despite the JIACG concept, it makes it difficult for a synchronized military response with OFDA. This challenge creates a diminished unity of command and unity of effort.<sup>32</sup>

Historically, DOD supports approximately 5 disasters of the 70 disasters OFDA responds to annually. The Armed Services respond when certain criteria have been met. These include close proximity of the Armed Forces to the disaster and the capability of the forces to render life-saving assistance. In any other situation, DOD's role would be to support the lead agencies: USAID/OFDA.<sup>33</sup> However, due to multiple layers of leadership approval that the CCDR must obtain prior to an FHA operation execution, the military's ability to respond quickly is much slower than the response time to execution by OFDA. Additionally, OFDA executes its primary mission several times every year, which allows it to strengthen its relationships with NGOs and IGOs, and to rehearse often, even if on a small scale.

However, since OFDA lacks a large-scale logistics capability and has a very small contingent of personnel, its ability to respond to large FHA crises could be severely limited without the assistance of the Armed Forces. The lack of key capabilities, logistics, and

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<sup>31</sup> The United States Naval War College: Joint Military Operations Department. "USAID/OFDA and D.o.D Roles in Foreign Disaster Response." NWC 6011, United States Agency for International Development: October 2006.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.



limited manpower resources requires their collaboration with CCDRs to respond to disasters that exceed their capability. However, the military needs guidance from OFDA when its specific capabilities are needed for each phase of the FHA operation to allow the military to contribute effectively toward an efficient unity of effort with OFDA. For this reason, contingency plans for large scale devastating disasters must be ready prior to the need for military intervention. Knowing that contingency plans were already developed at the COCOM staff by a JIACG that included an OFDA LNO would give the CCDR peace of mind that an executable plan was already in place for FHA. This plan would additionally save time, money, and assets because there would not be redundant capabilities or supplies in support of the FHA operation.

Contingency planning for natural disasters such as floods, tsunamis, and earthquakes; all disasters that have the potential to include involvement of the Armed Forces, could lead to unity of effort, efficiency, and a better outcome for all involved.

### **COUNTER-ARGUMENT**

One could argue that planning should remain a crisis action format for FHA. This is the way it has always been done and many lives have been saved in the past regardless of this process. Also, the military has always been there to assist when needed and has always managed to provide the logistics capability and a very capable, albeit somewhat delayed medical capability. However, the military response to the FHAs is not as fast as that of USAID, which is why Rumsfeld was correct in his placement of the Armed Forces of the U.S. in a supporting role to DOS's agencies. Perhaps this logic would have worked in the past, but now the military is stretched very thin. It is time to streamline the process and plan together and develop those partnerships, through the use of JIACGs, to close the distance to

that seamless execution. Perhaps this would save a significantly greater number of lives, enhance the United States' image, and of course, its national interests. Finally, it can always be argued that despite all best efforts, each disaster is a unique entity and thus every possible contingency could never be completely anticipated.

## **DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS**

Although the 2004 Indonesia Tsunami relief operation of the military was considered an overall success, there are many lessons learned from this FHA operation that can be used by standing JIACG planning staffs at the COCOMs. USNS Mercy was mobilized to help alleviate human suffering; however, the argument has been made that by the time USNS Mercy had arrived, the immediate threat to human life was already gone. The ships within the immediate vicinity of the disaster that arrived soon after the tsunami struck were effective in reducing illness from unclean water. The provision of clean water saved lives by avoiding death from diseases such as cholera, malaria, and dysentery; many more lives than USNS Mercy could have saved when it finally arrived on station. The time required to staff, stock and steam a current class hospital ship to a disaster area is so prolonged that this platform is incapable of providing disaster relief of an immediate nature; emergency care for life-threatening injuries, potable water, or shelter.

Additionally, according to several of the lessons learned, USNS Mercy was a "pushed" asset, versus a "pulled" asset. Leaders in the U.S. wanted to alleviate the horrible suffering literally left in the wake of the tsunami and encouraged leaders to deploy USNS Mercy to provide assistance. However, if JIACGs had been in place at the COCOMs that coordinated with USAID and reported back what specific capabilities were needed immediately, then perhaps the ship would never have set sail. If contingency plans were in

place prior to the tsunami, a better complement of health care providers may have been onboard as well. The medical staff taking care of the tsunami victims noted that there were a lot of pediatric patients and that more specialized pediatric physicians and nurses would have been ideal. Additionally, most patients only needed acute medical care and infrastructure and preventive medicine support instead of surgical care.<sup>34</sup>

Many of the lessons learned discuss difficulties with the lack of logistic capabilities and supplies that were matched to the FHA operation; specifically pediatric equipment and supplies. Additionally, the lack of airlift to respond efficiently is frequently mentioned in lessons learned. Others include mutual distrust of two very distinct cultures, the military and NGOs, which are suddenly thrown together.

The deployment of USNS Mercy to provide medical care for the tsunami victims contributed to a very successful information operations campaign. The sight of the large white ship with its red crosses signified something to the people in Banda Aceh that none of the warships could do; it affected the hearts and minds of the population in a positive manner. After the departure of USNS Mercy, the popularity of the U.S. in that region rose from 25 percent to 80 percent. USNS Mercy's mission changed the perceptions of an entire region which now views the U.S. as a country committed to international health.

The second valuable lesson learned was that NGOs aboard USNS Mercy also interacted well with the military during this FHA, and this also improved the military's reputation as an ambassador to world health. The military medical staff gained support from NGO leadership by proactively encouraging their participation in the daily logistics planning

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<sup>34</sup> Clare Harkin. "The 2004 Tsunami: Civil Military Aspects of the International Response." *Tsunami Evaluation Coalition: Coordination of International humanitarian assistance in tsunami-affected countries*. Undated document (accessed 8 May 2007).

meetings. Such close working relationships between the military and NGOs allowed them to find a common ground—treating victims of a disaster.

Finally, one of the most important lessons learned according to Ralph A. Cossa, is that the military leadership was able to bring command and control (C2) capability, which proved instrumental for the successful coordination of the FHA operation in Banda Aceh. The success of C2 increased the unity of effort. Additionally, the capabilities of logistics and airlift were also integral to the success of this FHA operation. The Combined Support Force 536's Combined Coordination Center (CCC), under the command of Marine Corps Lieutenant General Robert Blackman, was utilized by the LNOs from Australia, Britain, Japan, Thailand, and Singapore, and also by Civil-Military Coordination Cell, USAID/DART the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).<sup>35</sup>

If these lessons and many others not addressed in this paper are incorporated into JIACG planning cells, and into the plans themselves, a more streamlined collaborative response at all levels could save valuable time and assets. CCDRs often have only 72 hours or less to decide whether they should respond to a disaster. If contingency plans were already in place, the CCDR could execute the contingency plan instead of first trying to decide what decision is the most correct for the command.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In conclusion, as mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the focus of FHA should take advantage of a collaborative relationship between members of a JIACG within CCDRs planning staffs of which include a member of OFDA. In order to do this, DOD and DOS must "build strong partnerships" between all the actors involved in FHA operations. The role

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<sup>35</sup> Ralph A. Cossa. "Improving Lives: Military Humanitarian and Assistance Programs." *eJournal USA: Foreign Policy Agenda* November 2005. <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/1104/ijpe1104.htm>. (accessed May 5, 2007).

for DOD to be in a supporting role to DOS for FHA was right on target for Rumsfeld because DOS has something that DOD does not. It has OFDA, an experienced and fairly well streamlined FHA response agency. This agency responds to many more disasters than the Armed Forces and is better capable to do this in its primary role of alleviating human suffering. In its supporting role to DOS, or more correctly, USAID, the operational commanders should focus on contingency planning with their JIACGs to offer not only an effective response, but also an efficient, timely response thus possibly saving more lives. This focus on execution, which starts with contingency planning, will allow the military to get back to its primary mission much faster, "winning the Nation's wars."

### **RECOMMENDATIONS or LESSONS LEARNED**

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act in 1986 encouraged the military services to operate in a more collaborative, joint environment. This led to an increased unity of effort between the Services. However, this Act did not carry over to U.S. interagency operations. A similar act was proposed, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) released *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era: Phase I Report*.<sup>36</sup> It would be interesting to see this revisited and specifically apply it to the interagency organizations. It could be titled "The Goldwater-Nichols Joint Interagency Coordination Group Reorganization Act" or as "Goldwater-Nichols: JIACG".

Additionally, for FHA responses when the military is in a supporting role to DOS, perhaps the chain of command should fall under the DOS/USAID in order to increase efficiency of response to mobilize assets for the FHA. Also, along the lines of increasing responsiveness, designing and employing smaller hospital ships or modular, scaleable health

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<sup>36</sup> Clark A. Murdock and Richard W. Weitz. "Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: New Proposals for Defense Reform." *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 38:34-41

service support capabilities that are pre-positioned and can be configured onboard (Littoral Combat Ship) LCS class type ships may offer a more practical and rapidly deployable alternative to employing large assets from the U.S.

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